

**ACADEMIC PERSONNEL**

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# Retention, Tenure and Promotion (RTP)

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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**Basic Preparation**

1. **The terminology is confusing! What is a WPAF? What is a portfolio? What is the difference between the two? What is a “mini-review”?**
* The WPAF, or Working Personnel Action File, is defined as that file specifically generated for use in an evaluation cycle. It forms the basis for what is reviewed. The contents of the WPAF are defined in Section 4.100 of the campus RTP policy. Portfolios make up the candidate-developed portion of the WPAF. Although technically the portfolio is a subset of the WPAF, often the terms are used interchangeably.
* A periodic evaluation occurs in years when there is no full retention, tenure, or promotion review, and normally occurs in Years 1, 3, 5. It is designed to provide feedback for the next full review. An Abbreviated Portfolio is submitted and ratings are not given, hence the nickname “mini-review”.

1. **Who can give me advice regarding the contents of my portfolio?**
* Advice in assembling your portfolio is available from the following sources: Teaching, Learning and Assessment; members of the Faculty Affairs Committee; colleagues who have gone through the process; department chair; Dean
1. **Who is responsible for providing the physical materials needed in assembling my portfolio?**
* YOU are responsible for providing portfolio materials. In addition to your scholarly portfolio materials, contents for the WPAF are provided by Academic Personnel (in the case of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness); and individuals who write letters for inclusion in the WPAF.
1. **Do I need to state on the outside of the portfolio the specific type of evaluation or review for which the portfolio is submitted?**
* Yes, it is highly encouraged that a faculty member write his/her name and specific type of evaluation/review on the outside front and binding of their portfolio, as well as on the title page. This simple inclusion provides clarity for the reviewers.
1. **I’ve heard “the bigger the file, the better.” Is there any truth to this?**
* A faculty member needs to carefully organize his/her portfolio, be selective about the evidence included in the portfolio, focus on quality of evidence rather than quantity, and include examples of his/her BEST WORK. Reviewers appreciate evidence that is easy to find and can be clearly assessed. Binders that are so stuffed with documents that they *explode* when opened are not appreciated! Use more than one binder when necessary or be more selective.
1. **What about plastic page protectors?**
* Faculty members are encouraged not to use plastic page protectors for each page. This makes it difficult and time consuming for Academic Personnel to make copies.
1. **Are electronic versions of the RTP portfolio acceptable or do reviewers prefer paper?**
* A well organized and indexed electronic portfolio is definitely acceptable. It must be in a format that cannot be altered during the period of review (e.g., on disc or zip drive) and at least three copies are requested for multiple reviewers and Academic Personnel.
1. **Is there any flexibility with the due dates published in the Academic Personnel Calendar?**
* No, it is important that all deadlines be met to insure fairness, integrity, and consistency.

**RTP Reviewers**

1. **How are members of the University-wide RTP committee selected?**
* A vote is conducted through the Academic Senate after faculty members who are ineligible, e.g., due to sabbatical or difference in pay leave, are eliminated from consideration.
1. **How are department RTP committee members selected?**
* Department committee members can only be voted on after the University-wide RTP committee members are identified. See Section 7.200 for details.
1. **Who is responsible for arranging meetings for department RTP committee members?**
* The department chair reports out the results of the RTP committee elections. The committee member with the most votes will be asked to convene the first meeting of the department RTP committee. At the first meeting, the department RTP committee will select or elect a chair whose responsibility it will be to convene the committee when necessary.
1. **May a member of the RTP committee write a minority letter?**
* Discussion among committee members to reach consensus is highly encouraged. On rare occasions, a minority letter may be written by a member of the RTP committee.

**Credit Towards Tenure**

1. **I received credit towards tenure in my appointment letter. Does that mean I’m going up for early tenure or promotion?**
* No, credit towards tenure at the time of appointment and going up early are two different concepts. Up to two years of credit towards tenure may be granted at the time of appointment based on an employee’s record. Any credits reduce the length of the probationary period. For early tenure, a candidate must have achieved, before the normal probationary period, a record of accomplishment and level of performance for tenure in a shorter period of time. Early tenure is not normally considered until the candidate has completed at least one full retention review. Faculty who wish to be considered for promotion to Full Professor before the normal five year period of time in rank as an Associate Professor must demonstrate a record of accomplishments and performance that would be expected for promotion in a shorter period of time.

**Rebuttals**

1. **What is the candidate’s timing for rebuttal?**
* Rebuttal may occur at each, and any, level of review.
* The candidate may submit a written rebuttal no later than ten (10) days after receiving the written evaluation and recommendation.
1. **What if I’m out of town and don’t pick up the letter from the reviewer(s) until after the ten (10) day rebuttal period? Do I receive an additional ten (10) days to rebut?**
* No, it is the RTP candidate’s responsibility to make arrangements with Academic Personnel to receive RTP letters of recommendation if they plan to be away from campus. Letters are sent via e-mail and hard copy.
1. **In preparing my rebuttal, do I need to solicit letters of support from students, colleagues, or others?**
* No, it would be inappropriate to do so. Just respond based on the documentation in your portfolio and do not introduce new materials.

**Areas of Scholarship**

1. **Can I use the same evidence in more than one area of scholarship?**
* Yes, but be sure to make a clear distinction as to why it appears in each area. For example, you have researched and written a journal article. This is Discovery, Creation and Integration. The same journal article advances the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. You use its findings in the classroom and mentor other faculty using the findings.
1. **What if I think evidence belongs in one area of scholarship and the reviewers think it more appropriately belongs in another?**
* This can happen. If you are struggling to decide which area is most appropriate, read the definitions and look at the examples in the appendices, thinking about the audience your scholarly activity impacted. It is up to you to provide the best evidence as to where the documentation belongs. There are often fine distinctions and more than one area could be appropriate, but there may be a best fit. If you and reviewers disagree, you will have the opportunity to rebut.

**Performance Ratings**

1. **I was demoralized to receive an “Adequate” rating. I’ve never been a “C” student and feel that I have been working so hard. Is there anything you can say to reassure me?**
* The ratings received are not associated with grades. Perhaps a better way to think of “Adequate” is to substitute the term “Meets Expectations.” Faculty are not expected to be outstanding in all areas – areas of focus and opportunities may vary. This is why the tables provide for different combinations of ratings to achieve a successful result. However, for tenure and promotion, a rating of “Commendable” is required in Teaching & Learning, an important focus for our campus.
1. **I looked at a sample portfolio and the faculty member received “Outstanding” in all areas. I feel like I’m spread so thin and don’t know how I will accomplish all “Outstanding” ratings. What can I do?**
* Please don’t let the samples create unrealistic expectations for you. Concentrate on the areas you most need to work on in order to achieve a successful outcome and plan accordingly. There is no requirement to be “Outstanding” in all areas.
1. **In my tenure review, I received scores that look like they match the rankings shown in the table for promotion to Full Professor. Does that mean I can rest assured that I will be promoted when I apply?**
* Not necessarily. If you look at the Appendices, different performance standards and ratings apply for tenure or promotion to the rank of Full Professor for three of the four scholarship areas. Also, during the normal five year period of time in rank as an Associate Professor, you will be expected to continue to make increasingly distinguished contributions to the areas of scholarship.
1. **Regarding** **the abbreviated portfolio for periodic evaluation, can faculty members receive or request specific ratings for periodic evaluations?**
* No, the periodic evaluation is a formative process that does not allow for specific ratings.

**Early Tenure and Promotion**

1. **Is applying and receiving early tenure and promotion fairly routine?**
* No, this is not routine and needs to be viewed as an exceptional circumstance. Remember, the bar is high. A faculty member must accomplish a record of performance that normally takes longer to achieve, meets the standards and level of performance required, and demonstrates a pattern of achievements that gives evidence that increasingly distinguished contributions will continue.
1. **When and how do faculty notify Academic Personnel that they are seeking early tenure or early promotion?**
* The CSUMB Academic Personnel Calendar reports dates for notification of intent to apply for early promotion and/or early tenure, usually at the very beginning of Fall semester.

1. **If I receive early tenure or promotion, does my personal calendar change for the future regarding submittal of periodic or full portfolios? If so, how?**
* Please consult with Academic Personnel to review your individual circumstances.

**Documentation**

1. **I began at CSUMB as a lecturer before being hired into a tenure-track position. How much does my previous CSUMB work count or do I start anew?**
* You should document all relevant work but concentrate on what you have accomplished since your tenure-track appointment. It is likely that your previous work as a lecturer helped you become successful candidate and was considered in the conditions of your job offer.
1. **Does work performed and evaluated at previous institutions count?**
* Response is similar to #26, above.
1. **What about relevant work performed in related industry or business?**
* Response is similar to #26, above.
1. **What constitutes the Integrative Narrative?**
* The Integrative Narrative synthesizes and interconnects achievement in all four areas of scholarship in 3 – 5 pages. It also provides the candidate an opportunity to reflect on areas of professional growth and/or areas needing improvement.
1. **How does the Reflective summary for each area of scholarship differ from the Integrative Narrative?**
* A Reflective summary is placed at the beginning of each section of the four areas of scholarship. This summary statement relates the achievements described to the documentation in that section, along with a description of how the scholarly work will be further developed. It complements or provides further support for the Integrative Narrative but does not substitute for it. The Integrative Narrative provides an overview and ties achievements in all four areas of scholarship together.
1. **For the Integrative Narrative, can one recycle parts of it from previous reviews?**
* If the parts are still relevant, this can certainly be done.
1. **How do faculty analyze and present student feedback and scores? How do I effectively discuss student evaluations?**
* Faculty are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the Online Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness tool. This provides multiple forms of graphs and analyses; and also provides all narrative comments from students. Online evaluations enhance your ability to analyze student feedback without the time and paper it takes to do hundreds of evaluations manually. It also facilitates evaluators review and accuracy. Faculty are encouraged to promote the use of online evaluations in class by letting students know that student evaluations are seriously considered and contribute to improvements in student learning. Faculty are also encouraged to work with Teaching, Learning and Assessment to find ways to effectively present and discuss student evaluations.
1. **Do I include articles, grant proposals, etc. that have been rejected in the portfolio?**
* Certainly, this is work you have performed, however, rejected articles and grant proposals will not carry as much weight as those that have been published or accepted. Also, refrain from stating that an article is “in progress”. Be more specific. Has it been accepted but not printed yet? Has it been researched but not written? This information is important in determining the status of your work.
1. **I’ve served on Committees. How do I document this work?**
* Be specific here as well. Indicate your role and contributions. You could have been named as a member of a committee that doesn’t meet, or meets during your scheduled classes so you have not participated. If you have been an active, contributing member, document your work and/or have the committee chair comment on your participation.

**In conclusion, highlight your best work, focus on your personal contributions, and emphasize scholarly activities that are collaborative and serve department goals. When you are done, relax and reflect on the feedback you receive. Develop a plan of action for next time. Good luck!**